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GINA FERAZZI LOS ANGELES TIMES

A firefighter struggles to keep flames from advancing to adjacent homes while battling the Lilac fire at Rancho Monserate Country Club in Fallbrook on Thursday.

FAST-MOVING LILAC FIRE TORCHES NORTH COUNTY

'LOT OF DEAD HORSES,' STAMPEDE IN BONSALL

BY PAUL SISSON

Accustomed to the highly regimented life of the racetrack, hundreds of exquisitely conditioned thoroughbreds frantically galloped together Thursday trying to escape the blazing Lilac wildfire.

Terrified, the sleek speedsters stampeded through Bonsall's San Luis Rey Downs horse-training facility, whinnying, rolling their eyes and thundering through thick smoke as the fire quickly consumed the barns where they had spent the morning serenely munching hay.

The fire arrived at the sprawling 500-stall complex on Camino Del Rey about 1 mile east of Highway 76 a bit before 2 p.m., causing ever-more-frantic calls over the public-address system to move the horses to the facility's 1-mile track.

At first, the barn evacuation was orderly, with trainers doing all they could to coax the glossy and muscular bunch up a

SEE **HORSES • A8**

AL SEIB LOS ANGELES TIMES

FIRES ROAR IN SOUTHLAND

- Ventura County's Thomas fire continues onslaught, and officials worry it could burn for weeks. **A9**
- In San Diego County, crews will have to cope with wildly swirling winds today when fighting fires. **A6**
- For questions and answers about wildfires, see **A7**
- For details on where to evacuate, see **A8**

THOUSANDS EVACUATE AS WINDS FAN FLAMES

BY KRISTINA DAVIS & LYNDSAY WINKLEY

A wildfire fanned by December Santa Ana winds was running unchecked across North County Thursday night, chewing through neighborhoods and prompting thousands of people to flee as the flames spread dangerously fast toward the more populated coast.

By 8 p.m., the Lilac fire had grown to 4,100 acres and had zero containment, adding to the conflagration of wildfires wreaking havoc across Southern California this week.

At least three people trying to evacuate were injured in the blaze, which roared through Bonsall — a rural community of horses, livestock and agricultural lands — and into Oceanside. A fourth person suffered smoke inhalation. Gov. Jerry Brown declared a state of emergency in the county.

"We are in no way near the end of this," warned Ron Lane, the county's deputy chief administrative officer

SEE **FIRE • A6**

NINE NOW ACCUSE DEPUTY OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT

Four more women file suits or legal claims against Sheriff's Dept.

BY JEFF MCDONALD

Sexual misconduct accusations against Deputy Richard Fischer continue to mount as four more women filed lawsuits or legal claims against the San Diego County Sheriff's Department this week.

The latest allegations — two lawsuits and two claims — raise the number of complaints to nine. All of the alleged victims report similar stories of unwelcome hugs, groping and, in some cases, implied threats.

"When he clicked the seat belt into place, he rubbed L.R.'s breasts up and down using the heel of his hand and the inner part of his arm," one of the new lawsuits alleges. "Fischer said, 'Oh I hope your husband doesn't mind.' "

That complaint, filed Wednesday in San Diego Superior Court by a woman who did not want to be publicly identified as a victim of sexual assault, accuses Fischer

SEE **DEPUTY • A13**

FRANKEN SAYS HE'LL RESIGN FROM SENATE

Sen. Al Franken, D-Minn., becomes the highest-profile casualty in the list of lawmakers felled by sexual misconduct allegations. Franken says he will resign from the Senate "in the coming weeks." **Story, A4.**

S.D.'S ATKINS TO BE FIRST WOMAN TO LEAD SENATE

President pro tem taps state legislator to be his successor

BY JOSHUA STEWART

California Senate President Pro Tem Kevin de León announced Thursday that the chamber is set to pick San Diego Sen. Toni Atkins as his successor, making her the first woman and first openly gay legislator to hold the leadership position, a move that is bringing praise from Democrats and Republicans alike.

De León, a Democrat from Los Angeles, said in a statement that Atkins "will make history and be our Senate's next president pro tempore. I have every confidence she will lead America's most accomplished legislative chamber to even greater heights and build on our extraordinary progress."

De León said Democratic senators are unified in their support for Atkins, and there will be a formal vote in early January before a transition next year. De León is stepping down as president to run for the U.S. Senate

SEE **ATKINS • A11**

TODAY'S DEAL

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U-T INDEX

Comics	C5	Editorial	B6	Movies	E4	Scores	D6
Crossword	F3	Horoscope	F3	Obituaries	B5	Television	E3
Dear Abby	F3	Letters	B6	Stocks	C3	Weather	A12

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